

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 AS-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SNM-02 DEAE-00 EB-07

TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 AGRE-00 /093 W

-----022472 011209Z /47

R 010810Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3730

INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMCONSUL MANDALAY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

DEA BANGKOK

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 1904

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR, PDIP, SNAR

SUBJ: JOINT WEEKA #25, JUNE 25-JULY 1

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1. OPERATION MOHEIN III (LOU)

OPERATION MOHEIN III LAUNCHED JUNE 17 BY THE BURMA ARMY AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS IN THE SHAN STATE NEAR THE THAI BORDER APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS. THE BURMA ARMY LOCATED AND DESTROYED FIVE OPIUM REFINERIES AND CAPTURED SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF NARCOTICS INCLUDING 55 KILOS OF MORPHINE BASE AND OTHER MATERIAL. FOREIGN MILITARY ATTACHES STATIONED IN

RANGOON AND BURMESE JOURNALISTS WERE FLOWN TO THE SCENE OF THE OPERATION ON JUNE 30 TO VIEW THE RESULTS FIRST HAND. WHILE THERE THE ATTACHES AND NEWSMEN ALSO WITNESSED RATHER FORMAL CEREMONIES IN WHICH THE BURMESE RETURNED TO THAI AUTHORITIES ONE ROYAL THAI POLICE HELICOPTER AND 27 THAI BORDER POLICE WHO HAD INTRUDED INTO BURMESE TERRITORY DURING THE OPERATION. THIS INCIDENT HAD AT FIRST SEEMED A THREAT TO FURTHER THAI/BURMA COOPERATION AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS ALONG THE BORDER, BUT AT THE CEREMONY BOTH SIDES SEEMED INTENT ON CONCLUDING THE INCIDENT ON A FAVORABLE NOTE AND EXPRESSED THE DESIRE FOR FURTHER COOPERATION IN THIS SPHERE (RANGOON 3719).

2. SOVIET EMBASSY: DISSENTION AMONG THE LOCAL RANKS (CONF)

LOCAL EMPLOYEES WITH THE PRESS AND INFORMATION SECTION OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN RANGOON ARE THREATENING TO INSTIGATE A FULL SCALE LABOR DISPUTE WITH THEIR EMPLOYER. APPARENTLY THE TROUBLE BEGAN A LITTLE OVER A MONTH AGO WHEN THE RUSSIANS FIRED ONE EMPLOYEE FROM THE SECTION BECAUSE HE HAD TRANSLATED A BOOK ABOUT CHOU EN-LAI FROM CHINESE INTO BURMESE ON HIS OWN TIME. SHORTLY THEREAFTER A SOVIET PRESS OFFICER ABOUT TO DEPART ON HOME LEAVE TOLD SOME SENIOR LOCAL EMPLOYEES THAT HE WOULD HAVE BAD NEWS WHEN HE RETURNED FROM MOSCOW, NAMELY THAT 33 LOCAL EMPLOYEES FROM THE SECTION WOULD BE DISMISSED. WHEN WORD OF THIS SPREAD AMONG THE LOCAL STAFF IT CAUSED CONSIDERABLE CONSTERNATION, AND THE EMPLOYEES BEGAN TO SEEK MEANS TO PROTEST THE PROPOSED ACTION. AT THAT POINT
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THE SOVIET EMBASSY FIRED TWO ADDITIONAL LOCAL EMPLOYEES. IT ACCUSED THEM OF BEING PRC AGENTS, BUT BURMESE OPINION HELD THEY WERE RELEASED BECAUSE THEY HAD ATTEMPTED TO ORGANIZE OPPOSITION AGAINST THE THREATENED MASS DISMISSAL. (IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT BOTH SIDES ARE RIGHT). THE LOCAL EMPLOYEES ARE NOW OPENLY PROTESTING THE DISMISSALS AND DEMANDING THAT ALL THREE EMPLOYEES BE REINSTATED. OBVIOUSLY, THEY BELIEVE IF THEY CAN FORCE THE SOVIETS TO BACK DOWN ON THREE DISMISSALS, THE EMBASSY WOULD HARDLY DARE REMOVE 33. ADDING FUEL TO THEIR GRIVANCES IS THE FACT THAT THE U.S. EMBASSY RECENTLY GRANTED ITS LOCAL EMPLOYEES A SUBSTANTIAL WAGE INCREASE WHILE THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY HAS HELD LOCAL WAGES AT THE SAME LEVEL FOR MANY YEARS. THE LOCAL EMPLOYEES HAVE THREATENED TO BRING THEIR GRIEVANCES TO THE MINISTRY OF LABOR, AND THEY MAY ALREADY HAVE DONE SO. THEY ARE ALSO THREATENING SOMETHING ALMOST UNHEARD OF IN PRESENT DAY BURMA, A STRIKE.

COMMENT: SOVIET AND GUB OFFICIALS WILL PROBABLY MANAGE TO SOMEHOW DEFUSE THE SITUATION BEFORE IT BECOMES ANY MORE EMBARRASSING. IT CERTAINLY WOULD BE DAMAGING FOR SOMEONE'S IMAGE SHOULD CITIZENS OF THIS "SOCIALIST REPUBLIC" ENGAGE IN A PUBLIC LABOR DISPUTE WITH THE EMBASSY OF ANOTHER "SOCIALIST REPUBLIC." AT ANY RATE, THE WAGE INCREASES WE GRANTED OUR LOCAL

EMPLOYEES SEEMS TO HAVE PAID AN UNEXPECTED DIVIDEND.

3. GUB FINANCE OFFICIALS TO ATTEND IMF SEMINARS IN U.S. (UNC)

TWO OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE WILL DEPART FOR THE U.S. IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO ATTEND SEMINARS SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND. U MYO MYINT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR WITH THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE, WILL ATTEND A 4 1/2 MONTH IMF STUDY PROGRAM ON FINANCE AND PLANNING ANALYSIS. THE COURSE IS SCHEDULED FROM JULY THROUGH NOVEMBER IN WASHINGTON, D.C. WITH SIDE TRIPS TO NEW YORK AND OTTAWA. ANOTHER OFFICIAL, U KYAW HLAING, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BUDGET DEPARTMENT, WILL ATTEND AN IMF SEMINAR ON PUBLIC FINANCE FROM JULY 11 TO SEPTEMBER 16 IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RANGOON 1904

4. MORE RAIN FORECAST (UNC)

THE WEATHER BUREAU FINALLY HAD SOME GOOD NEWS FOR BURMESE FARMERS. AFTER LATE AND RELATIVELY WEAK MONSOON (WEEKAS #24 AND 23, ITEMS 4 AND 4 RESPECTIVELY), THE LONG RANGE WEATHER FORECAST FOR JULY CALLS FOR ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL IN ALMOST

ALL AREAS OF BURMA. IF THE FORECAST HOLDS, IT SHOULD MEAN THAT THIS YEAR'S PADDY CROP WILL BE LARGELY UNAFFECTED BY LESS THAN AVERAGE RAINFALL WHICH MUCH OF BURMA HAS EXPERIENCED UP UNTIL NOW. THERE HAS BEEN SUFFICIENT MOISTURE FOR MOST FARMERS TO PREPARE THEIR PADDY FIELDS AND A WET JULY SHOULD GET THE CROP OFF TO A GOOD START.

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5. NARCOTICS - ARRESTS AND SEIZURES (UNC)

TWO HUNDRED SEVENTEEN PERSONS WERE ARRESTED FOR DRUG ABUSE AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN RANGOON DURING THE PERIOD 3 - 25 JUNE. THE ARRESTS WERE PART OF A MAJOR VICE SUPPRESSION OPERATION DURING WHICH THE LOCAL POPULACE WAS ENCOURAGED TO MAIL IN ANONYMOUSLY, TIPS TO THE POLICE. TWO DRUG ADDICTS IN RANGOON WHO FAILED TO COMPLY WITH THE 1974 NARCOTIC DRUG LAW REQUIREMENT FOR COMPULSORY DRUG TREATMENT WERE SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS IMPRISONMENT EACH.

THE MAJOR SEIZURE OF THE PAST WEEK RESULTED IN OPERATION MOHEIN III, REPORTED SEPARTELY.
OSBORN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977RANGOO01904
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770235-0467
Format: TEL
From: RANGOON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
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Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1982908
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOINT WEEKA #25, JUNE 25-JULY 1 CONTENTS
TAGS: EAGR, PDIP, SNAR, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/63f3f071-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009